GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:140
ANSWERED ON:16.11.2007
NEW OPIUM POLICY
Kaushal Shri Raghuvir Singh

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has announced the new opium policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received representation against the above policy;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the action taken by the Government thereon;

(f) whether the number of opium growing farmers have declined due to the policy; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM)

(a): Yes Sir.

(b): The Annual General Licensing Conditions for grant of licence (commonly called the Opium Policy) was notified vide Notification No. GSR. 590(E) dated 13.9.2007. It prescribes conditions for grant of licence for cultivation of opium poppy on account of Central Government during the Opium Crop Year commencing on the 1st day of October, 2007 and ending with the 30th day of September, 2008.

(c): Yes Sir.

(d) & (e): Representations have been received from Hon'ble Members of Parliament, other VIPs, cultivators and their representatives against the above said General Conditions. These representations covered issues such as requests for lowering the minimum qualifying yield (MQY), issuing licences to such cultivators whose opium has been declared as inferior, issuing licenses to cultivators who tendered water − mixed opium below 55 degrees consistence, issuing licences in villages where the number of eligible cultivators are 5 or less, and issuing licenses for 20 Ares instead of 10 Ares to all the cultivators.

The policy has been finalized for the year. The General conditions are finalized after considering all the aspects such as total requirement of opium in India both to meet the domestic and international demand, current stocks of opium held by the Govt. Opium and Alkaloid Works (GOAWs), as well as keeping in view the imperative need to control diversion of opium produce in to the illicit channels. The policy has been finalized after proper examination and analysis of data for the previous crop year. The MQY has already been kept lower than what was indicated in the previous year's policy as forewarning. In order to curb the tendency to mix water, the clause on consistence is required and in order to consolidate cultivation and improve control, licences cannot be issued in villages with less than five eligible cultivators. The area per cultivator has been decided considering the demand and supply situation

(f) & (g): Yes Sir. The cultivators who have not fulfilled the conditions prescribed in the General Conditions (Policy) for issue of licence, for the crop year 2007-08 , were not be issued licences for cultivation of opium poppy.

The number of farmers who were issued licences during the past three crop years is as follows:

State	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Madhya Pradesh	36,352	34,151	28,283
Rajasthan	34,909	28,233	18,261
Uttar Pradesh	1,217	274	50
Total	72,478	62,658	46,594